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Micaela Beall
8th Grade, Clay Middle School
Team Phoenix
kbeall@indy.rr.com
(317) 569-9648

A Story of Courage, Sacrifice, and Duty

I learned the true meaning of courage, sacrifice, and duty from my Grandfather. My Grandfather taught me that it is my duty to step up, be courageous, and be willing to sacrifice for others. Grandpa was the young age of 21 when he went off to war to defend his country and to fight for our freedom. He sacrificed fifty-one months of his own life to guarantee that we all have the freedoms we enjoy today.

My Grandfather is older than most. He turns 90 this month and not much slows him down. He owns his own business and still works every day. I admire my Grandpa's strength, courage, work ethic, and sense of duty to his country. Growing up, life was tough for my Grandpa and his family. Jobs were scarce, work was difficult, and the family had few luxuries. Grandpa's parents were Eastern European immigrants who spoke very little English. His family learned to survive and grew to appreciate each other, the few things they had, the benefits of hard work, and the freedoms America offered.

Grandpa learned from his struggles growing up. He believed that it was his duty to give back to a country that offered so much to he and his family so, in May of 1941, he joined the army. Our country was attacked at Pearl Harbor in 1941, and my Grandfather was off to the South Pacific to fight against those who oppose the freedoms our country stands for. Grandpa was in the 40th Infantry Division, stationed mainly in the war zones of the Philippines, Hawaii, and Australia, where he had to learn how to survive in combat and live in the jungle. The jungles were wet and rainy and the bugs and mosquitoes were as bad as the gun fire. Grandpa's responsibilities included sitting guard duty alone at night in the jungle and he spent his days fighting off the enemy, the bugs, exhaustion, and hunger. During his time at war, Grandpa risked his life daily to preserve our freedoms and he witnessed many horrible things at a very young age. Many of his wartime experiences, he is still not able to share with anyone to this day. In the end, however, Grandpa was one of the lucky ones that made it home. Many of his good friends were not so lucky.

When Grandpa came back to the United States after the war he was a little older, much thinner, and a lot wiser. He came home with no regrets, no job, and only the clothes the Army gave him. Though his time fighting for our country was difficult and he experienced many things that most people could not endure, it made him the man he is today. Grandpa attributes his great strength of character to his

time in the jungles of the South Pacific. He believes just as strongly today that each of us has a duty to step up and sacrifice for our country when called upon.

My Grandpa is a wise man and he tries to teach my brother and I many of the things he has learned through the years. Grandpa will never forget his time in the war, and he has had to learn to deal with many of his experiences. The most important thing I have learned from my Grandfather is that it is my duty to stand up, sacrifice, and fight for what I know is right. He sacrificed to preserve my rights, freedoms, and way of life and I truly appreciate his courage and effort in the war. I am grateful to all who have served, or are currently serving, in the fight to preserve this country's freedoms. Someday it may be my turn to stand up for what is right. When that day comes, I know that I too will be willing to sacrifice for my country, just as my Grandfather did many years ago.